

### The Fight in Iraq Is Winnable

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Lately news about our progress in Iraq has contrasted sharply with reports of hope and progress presented to Congress by Department of Defense representatives - a real disconnect, Vietnam *deja vu*. So I went to Iraq last weekend with six other members of Congress to see for myself.

Our currently stated objectives are to establish reasonable security and foster the creation of a secular, representative government with a stable market economy that provides broad opportunity throughout Iraqi society. Attaining these objectives in Iraq would inevitably transform the Arab world and immeasurably increase our future national security.

These objectives are worthy of a fight, of sacrifice, of more lives and limbs lost now to save thousands, perhaps tens or hundreds of thousands, in the future.

In Mosul last Monday a colonel in the 101st Airborne put it to me quite simply: "Sir, this is worth doing." He's absolutely right so long as we have a reasonable chance of success at a price that is not too dear.

My trip to Iraq convinced me we have a reasonable chance to prevail. How? Lots of things would be helpful - for example, more international help. But two things are critical. First, Iraqis must take the lead against the guerrillas. They must step forward and be willing to fight and die to establish a free and representative society. We can't give them freedom. They have to take it. We can only help. We will lose without them. They will lose without us. We will know this is headed in the right direction as soon as Iraqis start fighting, killing and jailing guerrillas in large numbers.

The second critical ingredient to success is our own patience and determination. We must be resolute and it sure helps to show it. With this in mind, we should quickly approve the president's request for eighty-seven billion additional dollars. No one wants to spend such a sum, but our troops in Iraq said over and over "Money is ammo."

Our troops will be in less danger if the boo birds hold their tongues, support more funding and wait a bit longer to see if the Iraqi people will step forward.

Finally, I think we have a problem with overly pessimistic media coverage that emboldens our enemies, discourages our potential allies and lessens our resolve. We may need a few credible Baghdad Bob's to undo the harm done by our media. I'm afraid it is killing our troops.

There is good news to balance the bad. American soldiers with their typical "can do" attitude and ingenuity are engaging in literally thousands upon thousands of small reconstruction projects working with Iraqi contractors and citizens.

Through decentralized decisions by unit commanders, the 101st Airborne Division alone has spent nearly \$23 million in just the past few months. This sum goes a very long way in Iraq.

For example, hundreds upon hundreds of schools are being renovated, repainted, re-plumbed, and re-roofed. Imagine the effect on the children and their parents. That's why money is ammo. It leads to partnerships.

We can win this thing with Iraqis at our side. And it would be a huge win for both countries.